

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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SUBJ: ISRAELI PRESS REACTION TO SADAT'S INTERVIEW IN "LE MONDE"

REF: CAIRO 727 AND 741

1. ISRAELI PRESS JANUARY 22 CONTAINS EXTENSIVE QUOTES FROM AND COMMENTS ON SADAT INTERVIEW WITH LE MONDE. MOST NEWSPAPERS HIGHLIGHT "NEGATIVE" AND "HARDLINE" EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW. FOR EXAMPLE: "SADAT: I HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER IN RETURN FOR TERRITORIES WHICH BELONG TO US." (HAARETZ, DAVAR). "SADAT: THE PASSES AND ABU-RODEIS--THIS IS THE MINIMUM WE DEMAND NOW" (AL HAMISHMAR). "SADAT: IF THERE WON'T BE A TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL--A WAR WILL BREAK OUT WITHIN THREE MONTHS." (HATZOFE).

2. MOST EDITORIAL COMMENTS REGARD INTERVIEW AS NEGATIVE AND INDICATIVE OF A NON-COMPROMISING STANCE. MAARIV EDITORIAL
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EXPRESSES ALARM AT DISCREPANCY BETWEEN SADAT'S POSITION, AS

STATED IN INTERVIEW, AND RUMORS FROM WASHINGTON. "WASHINGTON SAYS THAT SADAT WILL AGREE TO DEMILITARIZATION OF AREAS ISRAEL VACATES: SADAT SAYS THAT HE WILL AGREE TO DEMILITARIZATION ONLY IF ISRAEL AGREES TO DEMILITARIZE THE NEGEV..WASHINGTON SAYS THAT EGYPT IS NOW FINALLY READY TO OPEN THE CANAL FOR ISRAELI GOODS. SADAT SAYS THAT FREE NAVIGATION IN THE CANAL DEPENDS ON RABIN'S BEHAVIOUR. WHO REFLECTS THE TRUE POSITION OF THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT? WASHINGTON BELIVES THAT SADAT WILL AGREE TO EXTEND THE MANDATE OF THE UNEF IN THE SINAI FOR MORE THAN SIX MONTHS. SADAT SAYS THAT HE WON'T AGREE TO ANY FREEZING OF THE PRESENT SITUATION AND IT IS NECESSARY TO ACT SPEEDILY BECAUSE OTHERWISE A WAR WILL BE UNAVOIDABLE. WHOM IS MORE RELIABLE?.."EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT THE COMBINATION OF SECRET TALKS AND PUBLIC INTERVIEWS "CREATES A TOTALLY DISTORTED PICTURE"..

3. HATZOFÉ EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT LE MONDE INTERVIEW REVEALS NATURE OF THE PEACE WHICH SADAT IS CONSIDERING: "TO PUSH ISRAEL TO THE 1947 BORDERS, WHERE HE IS PREPARED TO SEE 'A JUST SOLUTION', AND TO DO 'JUSTICE' TO THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE"..

4. DAVAR EDITORIAL ALSO SEES TOUGH LINE ON SADAT'S REMARKS AND STRESSES THAT IN SPITE OF SADAT'S "PRESENT REFUSAL", ANY "ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE BALL TO THE ISRAELI COURT MUST BE REJECTED." EDITORIAL ALSO NOTES THAT AT PRESENT CAIRO REJECTS THE ISRAELI INSISTENCE THAT IT "WOULD NOT AGREE TO ANY SECRET CLAUSES.."

5. AL-HAMISHMAR EDITORIAL IS LESS NEGATIVE THAN OTHERS, BUT NEVERTHELESS REFLECTS WHAT IN ISRAELI TERMS IS "HEALTHY SKEPTICISM." EDITORIAL NOTES THAT SADAT MENTIONS WILLINGNESS TO SIGN PEACE TREATY" "BUT AT SAME TIME HE THREATENS TO GO TO WAR..IF THE DEMANDS PRESENTED BY HIM ARE REJECTED." IT NOTES ON ONE HAND HIS WILLINGNESS FOR SETTLEMENT IN STAGES AND HIS CONTINUED RELIANCE ON GOOD OFFICES OF SECRETARY, BUT POINTS OUT ON OTHER HIS PRESENTATION AS CONDITION ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM BOTH PASSES AND OIL FIELDS. EDITORIAL FURTHER CITES FRANKNESS WITH WHICH SADAT SPOKE OF EGYPTIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS, BUT "CAN ONE BELIEVE WHAT HE SAYS OR IS ALL THIS SO MUCH EYEWASH, DESIGNED TO LEAD ISRAEL UP THE GARDEN PATH?" AL-HAMISHMAR DRAWS CONCLUSION THAT "SADAT WILL, AT THIS STAGE, TRY TO GET LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHAT HE WANTS THROUGH THE US. ONE MAY ASSUME THAT SADAT IS UNAWARE THAT THERE CANNOT BE AGAIN THE SAME SURPRISE AS ON YOM KIPPUR AND THAT HE THEREFORE REGARDS THE MILITARY OPTION AS APPLICABLE ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A TOTAL MILITARY DEADLOCK.."

6. COMMENT: DETERMINATION TO PUT WORST POSSIBLE LIGHT ON PRONOUNCEMENTS BY ARAB LEADERS HAS BECOME HALLMARK OF ISRAELI PRESS. THIS TENDENCY INCREASES WHEN, AS AT PRESENT, EVENTS

APPEAR TO BE MOVING ISRAELI TOWARD MAJOR DECISIONS. WE DO NOT
BELIEVE BLEAK ASSESSMENTS OF TODAY'S EDITORIALS COULD REFLECT
A VERY CONSIDERED REACTION ON PART OF PRESS SINCE CONTENT OF
INTERVIEW HAD JUST BEEN LEARNED. APART FROM
OBLIQUE CRITICISM BY DEFMIN PERES (FBIS TA 211924), GOI HAS
NOT YET REACTED.
VELIOTES

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